

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 EB-08  
DOTE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 /136 W  
-----096129 071433Z /50

R 071337Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8625  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USINT HAVANA  
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN  
COMIDEASTFOR  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2527

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR, PINT, ELTN, ET, DJ, SO  
SUBJECT: RAILWAY REPAIRS COMPLETED TO DJIBOUTI BORDER

REF: DJIBOUTI 250 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ETHIOPIA HAS ANNOUNCED COMPLETION OF REPAIRS  
OF ADDIS-DJIBOUTI RAILROAD BRIDGES AND TRACK UP TO  
DJIBOUTI BORDER. RAILWAY HAS BEEN CLOSED BETWEEN DIRE  
DAWA AND DJIBOUTI SINCE JUNE 1, 1977. CONTINUED OPERA-  
TION OF RAIL LINE WILL PROBABLY BE TEST OF DJIBOUTI  
AND SOMALI INTENTIONS TOWARD ETHIOPIA. IMMEDIATE ECO-  
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NOMIC IMPACT FOR ETHIOPIA WILL BE MARGINAL, BUT BENEFIT  
TO GENERAL OPULATION DEPENDENT ON IMPORTED GOODS  
WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL. END SUMMARY.

1. ETHIOPIAN MEDIA HAVE REPORTED THAT "VICTORY  
TRAIN" TRAVELLING FROM ETHIO-DJIBOUTI BORDER TOWN  
OF DWELLE TO DIRE DAWA ON JUNE 3. TRAIN STOPPED

AT VARIOUS STATIONS ALONG ROUTE, INCLUDING AYISHA, LASSARAT, ADIGALA, MELLO, HAREYA, ELBA AND SHENELLE TO PERMIT "MEMBERS OF ISSA NATIONALITY" AND OTHERS TO EXPRESS THEIR JOY OVER COMPLETION OF REPAIRS TO BRIDGES AND RAILWAY. DIRG MEMBERS 2ND LT. DEMISSEW KASSAYE, COL. ZELEKE BEYENE AND 2ND LT. DEMEKE BANJAW AS WELL AS HARARGHE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR CDR. LEMMA GUTEMA, MIN OF TRANSPORT PERMSEC IBSA GUTEMA AND RAILWAY COMPANY MANAGER BEKELE GELLETA PARTICIPATED IN RE-OPENING CELEBRATIONS ALONG ROUTE AND IN DIRE DAWA.

2. WHILE IT APPEARS REPAIRS ON ADDIS-DJIBOUTI RAILROAD HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETED, IT HAS NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED WHEN REGULAR SERVICE FOR CARGO AND PASSENGERS WILL COMMENCE. THERE IS SPECULATION SERVICE COULD BEGIN AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK (JUNE 12), HOWEVER, OTHER SOURCES HAVE INDICATED SOME "BUREAUCRATIC" PROBLEMS MUST STILL BE RESOLVED. THESE PROBLEMS PRESUMABLY INVOLVE OWNERSHIP STATUS AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDEBTEDNESS OF OWNERS AS OUTLINED IN REFTEL, PARAS 7-9. (REFTEL IS DEFINITIVE ANALYSIS ON ETHIO-DJIBOUTI RAILROAD, WITH WHICH EMBASSY ADDIS IS IN AGREEMENT.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2527

3. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RAILWAY RE-OPENING WILL NOT BE IMMEDIATELY SIGNIFICANT FOR ETHIOPIA. IT IS BELIEVED THAT SIX MONTHS OF CARGO DESTINED FOR ETHIOPIA IS ALREADY AWAITING SHIPMENT FROM DJIBOUTI AND THAT BULK IS CONSUMER GOODS RATHER THAN PRODUCTIVE MATERIALS. THIS COULD ALLEVIATE SOME OF GRAIN SHORTAGE PROBLEM. ETHIOPIA MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO CONSERVE SOME PETROLEUM SUPPLIES (POL), THUS SAVING ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE, AND PROBABLY RENEW PROFITABLE TRADE RELATIONS WITH DJIBOUTI. HOWEVER, THESE SMALL GAINS WILL NOT HAVE MAJOR IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC BENEFIT. RE-OPENING OF RAILWAY, AT LEAST INITIALLY, WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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VIEWED BY PMGSE AS TEST OF POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH DJIBOUTI AND MILITARY/SECURITY RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA.

4. NOW THAT RAILWAY HAS BEEN REPAIRED UP TO DJIBOUTI BORDER, PMGSE WILL BE WATCHING CLOSELY SOMALI AND DJIBOUTIAN ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS TOWARD RE-OPENING AND FUNCTIONING OF ENTIRE LINE. IN MENGISTU'S MOST RECENT WARNING TO SOMALIA (MAY 13) HE CAUTIONED THAT PERSISTENT SOMALI POLITICAL AND MILITARY INTERFERENCE IN ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS COULD FORCE REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIA "TO DRY UP WELL OF TROUBLE AT ITS SOURCE" (ADDIS ABABA 2177). ON DJIBOUTI, PMGSE HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT DJIBOUTI'S CONTINUED SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE ARE VITAL TO ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS (ADDIS ABABA 1485). THIS WAS MOST RECENTLY (MARCH 30) OUTLINED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY (MOFA) OFFICIAL FOLLOWING MOFA STATEMENT (MARCH 25). MOFA STATEMENT AVERRED "ETHIOPIA WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SEE THAT INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF DJIBOUTI IS PRESERVED." THUS, ETHIOPIA MAY USE ANY SOMALI SABOTAGE OF RAILROAD, EITHER INSIDE ETHIOPIA OR DJIBOUTI, AS PRETEXT FOR "LEGITIMATE" REPRISALS AGAINST SOMALI TERRITORY AND/OR JUSTIFICATION FOR COMING TO DJIBOUTI'S "DEFENSE".

5. EMBASSY ADDIS DEFERS TO EMBASSY DJIBOUTI FOR MORE PRECISE ESTIMATE OF WHEN RAILWAY WILL BE FULLY OPERATIONAL AND ANALYSIS OF IMPACT RE-OPENING WILL HAVE ON ETHIO-DJIBOUTI-FRANCO-SOMALI RELATIONS.

MATHERON

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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